Garden Ideas for November

As I walked around our 5 acres this weekend, I realized that I was already making my “wish list” for next spring. My goal is to have a spark of fall color in a few more places. Trees, shrubs, perennials can all provide fall interest in your landscape. I am trying stay positive about the weeds that appeared during my surgery and recovery time. Isn’t that one of the best traits of a gardener? Ever being the optimist? “Next year I will win the battle of the weeds and mulch earlier” will be my mantra next spring.

Ornamental grasses offer fall and winter color and movement in the landscape. I leave the seed heads for the birds to enjoy through the winter and cut all grasses back in early spring. Japanese Blood grass is an easy way to add a splash of red to your wind garden. It is not aggressive (at least where I have it planted) and only reaches 12 to 14 inches in height. Pampas grass is a stretch for my zone, but mine seems to be thriving in its protected location. A suggested alternative for Pampas grass is Karl Foerster. Don’t forget about our native grasses! I am slowly replacing the Miscanthus (considered invasive) with Big and Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, Prairie Dropseed and Switch grass.

Autumn sedum and Joe Pye Weed are also beautiful in the fall and winter. The snow-covered seed heads also provide winter treats for the birds.

The Ginkgo trees have put on a spectacular show of color this year! Did you know that the Ginkgo tree is the sole surviving species from an ancient family of trees that flourished millions of years ago?

I have discovered a few books that will help me with my plans for more fall color in my landscape. 8 Months of Color written by Janet Macunovich provides the reader with an easy way to choose plants by week of peak bloom, color and height. The plants listed are for USDA hardiness zones 4, 5, 6 and 7. Tracy Disabato-Aust has written a “must have” for all busy gardeners. Her book, 50 High-Impact, Low-Care Garden Plants proves that low-maintenance doesn’t mean low-interest.

Pam Bennett, co-author of Garden-Pedia: An A-To-Z Guide to Gardening Terms, and contributing writer for the magazine, Ohio Gardener, suggests some gardening tasks for November that include: 1) Clean and sharpen tools and lawn mower 2) Plant amaryllis and paperwhites for holiday bloom 3) Cut fresh greens from your evergreens to be used for holiday decorations and 4) Consider purchasing a balled and burlapped living Christmas tree. If you do this, dig the hole for the tree before the ground freezes.

The Bald Cypress tree we planted close to the “deer path” has been surrounded with snow fence to keep rubbing bucks at bay. We have 3 Norway spruce that seem to be the victims each year as the deer travel through our property. Thankfully they haven’t started on any new trees…..yet!

I am headed out to the garden to check on the status of my late-planted bush green beans. I will need to pull out the sheets again since the weather forecast is calling for frosty temperatures again! The snow pod peas have grown to at least 5 feet tall and are still blooming. The Bok choy is ready to harvest and the Kale and salad lettuce love the cooler weather.

I am looking forward to receiving my first seed catalog in the mail. I have made a list and will order early this year, so I am not disappointed by the message “sold out”! Have you started making your list for next year? Look around and see what spots need more color!